
CENTRAL REGION COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE SERVICES
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2003
12:30 p.m.

Presiding: Jane Reister Conard, Chair

Present: Edward Armour, Allan Ayoub, Cynthia Brothers, Greg Diven, Norman Fitzgerald, Representative Brent Goodfellow, Bev Graham, Bo Hall, Todd Henriksen, Paul Jackson, Steven Rosenberg, Kevin Schofield, Louie Silveira, Karen Silver, Melva Sine, Russ Thelin, Kerry Steadman, Megan Weisen, James Whitaker and Commissioner Gene D. White.

Excused: Jan Cook, Charles Daud, Douglas Johnston, Dr. Stephen Ronnenkamp, Dean Walker and Julie Zimmerman.

Absent: Susan Archibeque, Deirdre Darby Duffin, and John Hill.

Guests: Agnes Lomu, Laurel Morris and Ken Serre.

Staff: Sarah Brenna, Leno Franco, Jane Gardner, Diane Lovell, Melissa Olsen, Jon Pierpont and Verene Froisland.

Call to Order & Announcements

Jane Reister Conard, called the meeting to order at 12:55 p.m. (following the Legislative Presentation & Holiday Reception) and welcomed all those in attendance. She then commented on the success of the Legislative Presentation and thanked everyone for their contributions.

Chairperson Conard announced that James Whitaker was recently promoted to Deputy Director of the Department of Workforce Services (DWS). She then noted that there should be a new Central Region Director by January.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – Central Region Council meeting of Thursday, November 6, 2003 and Executive Committee meeting of Thursday, November 20, 2003.

Edward Armour moved to approve all of the items listed under the Consent Agenda. Russ Thelin seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. The motion passed.

New Member Nomination for Steven Rosenberg

Steven Rosenberg is CEO of Liberty Heights Fresh Market – Specialty Food Retailer.

Paul Jackson moved to approve Steven Rosenberg as a new member of the Central Region Council. Mr. Armour seconded the motion. All voted “Aye”. The motion passed.

Committee Reports

Basic Needs – Karen Silver gave an update on the “Need Help” cards. She stated that the first focus group meeting was held last week and their suggestions are being taken to workers and managers in Central Region. Basic Needs will be discussing issues concerning immigrants

coming in with language barriers. Basic Needs will also be researching a comment made by Representative James Gowan regarding what appears to be a lack of communication between the Skills Center and DWS in Tooele. Ms. Silver then spoke concerning the need for more flexibility in the TANF time limitations, especially when working with customers that have multiple barriers. Currently the Legislature has only allows at the end of the 36 months. Ms. Silver then stated that Basic Needs would like to recommend that the Council support the efforts of the Advocates in presenting this needed change to the Legislature and support the Department next year in its review of the 36 month time limit issue.

James Whitaker, Acting Regional Director, stated that Executive Director, Raylene Ireland, has committed to taking a formal look at the flexibility issue mentioned by Ms. Silver.

Marketing – Mr. Armour thanked the Metro Employment Center for their hospitality. He then stated that the Marketing Committee had a meeting with Darin Brush, Kim Auberger and Curt Stewart to go over the draft of the new marketing plan. The goal is to promote business services and target those sectors where there has been growth, build a better brand name for DWS, build a reputation of awareness of both business services and jobs.utah.gov and help direct prospects in the system. Mr. Armour concluded by stating that the Marketing Committee is trying to create a message that DWS connects business with solutions.

Training & Development – Norman Fitzgerald stated that the committee did not reach a decision on any of the four training provider applications and a special committee meeting is scheduled December 18 @ noon to further discuss the applications.

Youth Council – Mr. Jackson thanked the Council for allowing the Youth Council to show the YES promotional video during the Holiday Reception. Several members of the Youth Council were in attendance and it was enjoyable to have them see the support of the YES Program. Mr. Jackson then spoke concerning an upcoming event scheduled for February 2nd entitled “Job Groundhog Job Shadow Day”. It’s a day where individuals throughout the community will be encouraged to have youth shadow them to gain experience. Mr. Jackson then commented on discussions that have been made concerning the RFP for youth vendors. He noted that Central Region will not be letting an RFP this year due to two factors: (1) the RFP conditions will be contingent upon WIA reauthorization requirements; and, (2) the DWS contract with the County for the YES Program may be extended until 2005.

Chairperson Conard spoke concerning the YES video and asked Mr. Jackson to convey the Council’s congratulations on a very good video – it was to the point and well worth the effort.

Central Region Eligibility Center Presentation

Jon Pierpont, DWS Assistant Region Director for the Central Region, opened his presentation by indicating that he has responsibility for Eligibility Services in Central Region. Mr. Pierpont then distributed and discussed a handout entitled “Central Region Eligibility Operations”. He stated that Central Region eligibility is unique from other regions as it has two distinct functions – Initial and Ongoing eligibility. Initial eligibility is performed in each of the Employment Centers across the valley and ongoing eligibility is performed at the Central Region Eligibility Service Center (CRESC), which utilizes the latest telephone call center technology to provide services to customers.

Mr. Pierpont continued by stating that over the last year, Central Region experienced a 27% increase in workload. Utah’s Food Stamp caseloads grew to over 12,000 cases, to an all time high of approximately 45,000 cases. Central Region is currently serving a 20,000 caseload size at the CRESC and is taking an average of 3,600 new applications each month in the

Employment Centers. Management shifted 24 Employment Counselors from case management to the eligibility function to address the significant growth in customers accessing support service programs. In addition to that, Raylene Ireland, DWS Executive Director went to the Legislature and acquired 50 temporary positions to address the workload increases. Central Region received 21 of the 50 positions.

Mr. Pierpont then spoke about challenges and results. Challenges include a 38% turnover for FY 2003 (64 staff), and projected turnover for FY 2004 is 43% (41 staff to date). Central Region will be hiring 30 new staff beginning in January and 11 of the 17 leadership positions have less than one year's experience. Results show that Central Region has a 5.5% error rate for Food Stamp Quality Control. A major overhaul has occurred in Central Region eligibility to streamline our processes and pathways and to examine where we could gain efficiencies in the region. Mr. Pierpont concluded by stating that Job Seeker/Supportive Service Survey results improved from an overall satisfaction score of 3.8 to 4.1 in Central Region.

Council members then commented and asked questions concerning Mr. Pierpont's presentation.

Regional Director's Report

Mr. Whitaker thanked Mr. Pierpont for his presentation. He then stated that this kind of effort is not successful without the Employment Center Managers working together with Mr. Pierpont and thanks the Managers for their efforts as well. Mr. Whitaker indicated that the Department has been very concerned about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) measures and outcomes and he was pleased to announce that the Department's data expert said that DWS passed all of the 2002 WIA measures. Mr. Whitaker then expressed his appreciation to the Council and to staff for their contributions and hard work.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 22nd at Noon.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.